IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An aqueous dispersion of water-soluble polymers ~~of ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers, obtainable~~ obtained by free radical polymerization of ~~the monomers~~ ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers in an aqueous medium in the presence of at least one stabilizer, wherein ~~the polymerization is carried out in the presence of at least one water-soluble polymer of~~ the at least one stabilizer comprises:

(a) at least one water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of a graft ~~polymers~~ polymer of vinyl acetate and/or vinyl propionate on polyethylene ~~glycols~~ glycol, a polyethylene ~~glycols~~ glycol blocked at one or both terminal groups with an alkyl, a carboxyl or an amino ~~groups and/or~~ group, and a copolymer ~~copolymers~~ of alkyl polyalkylene glycol ~~methacrylates~~ methacrylate and methacrylic acid; and

~~and at least one water-soluble polymer selected from~~

(b) at least one water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of a hydrolyzed ~~copolymers~~ copolymer of vinyl alkyl ~~ethers~~ ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ a free carboxyl ~~groups~~ group and in the form of ~~the salts~~ a salt at least partly neutralized with one or more alkali metal hydroxides or one or more ammonium bases, ~~and/or of water-soluble starch from the group consisting of~~ a cationically modified potato starch, an anionically modified potato starch, a degraded potato starch and maltodextrin~~, as a stabilizer~~.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein at least one polyalkylene ~~glycols~~ glycol having a molar ~~masses~~ mass Mn of from 100 to 100000, and at least one polyalkylene ~~glycols~~ glycol blocked at one or both terminal groups

with an alkyl, a carboxyl or an amino ~~groups~~ group and having a molar ~~masses~~ mass Mn of from 100 to 100000, are used as the at least one water-soluble ~~polymers~~ polymer of ~~group~~ (a).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein the hydrolyzed ~~copolymers~~ copolymer of vinyl alkyl ~~ethers~~ ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ a free carboxyl ~~groups~~ group and in the form of ~~the salts~~ a salt at least partly neutralized with one or more alkali metal hydroxides or one or more ammonium bases, and/or maltodextrin, are used as the at least one water-soluble ~~polymers~~ polymer of ~~group~~ (b).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein a hydrolyzed ~~copolymers~~ copolymer of vinyl methyl ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ a free carboxyl ~~groups~~ group and in the form of ~~the salts~~ a salt at least partly neutralized with sodium hydroxide solution, potassium hydroxide solution or ammonia, are used as the at least one water-soluble ~~polymers~~ polymer of ~~group~~ (b).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein the at least one stabilizer comprises:

(a) one or more graft polymers of vinyl acetate on polyethylene ~~glycols~~ glycol and having a molecular weight M_n of from 1000 to 100000;

and

(b) one or more hydrolyzed copolymers of vinyl methyl ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ free carboxyl groups and in the form of ~~the~~ salts at least partly neutralized with sodium hydroxide solution, potassium hydroxide solution or ammonia ~~are used as water-soluble polymers~~.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein the at least one stabilizer comprises:

(a) one or more copolymers of alkyl polyalkylene glycol ~~methacrylates~~ methacrylate and methacrylic acid;

and

(b) at least one hydrolyzed copolymer of vinyl methyl ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ a free carboxyl ~~groups~~ group and in the form of ~~the salts~~ a salt at least partly neutralized with sodium hydroxide solution, potassium hydroxide solution or ammonia ~~are used as water-soluble polymers~~.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein monoethylenically unsaturated C_3- to C_5-carboxylic acids, vinylsulfonic acid, styrenesulfonic acid, acrylamidomethylpropanesulfonic acid, vinylphosphonic acid and/or the alkali metal or ammonium salts thereof are used as the ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein the polymerization of the ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers is carried out in the presence of other ethylenically unsaturated monomers.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 8, wherein the polymerization of the ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers is carried out in the presence of at least one other monomer selected from the group consisting of acrylamide, methacrylamide, an acrylic ~~esters~~ ester of monohydric alcohols of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a methacrylic ~~esters~~ ester of monohydric alcohols of 1 or 2 carbon atoms, vinyl acetate, vinyl propionate, ~~dialkylaminoethyl (meth)acrylates~~ dialkylaminoethyl(meth)acrylate,

~~dialkylaminopropyl (meth)acrylates~~ dialkylaminopropyl(meth)acrylate, diallyldimethylammonium chloride, vinylimidazole, and quaternized vinylimidazole.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein~~, in the free radical polymerization,~~ the ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers are acrylic acid and are ~~is~~ used in the absence of other monomers.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 1, wherein the free radical polymerization is additionally carried out in the presence of at least one crosslinking agent.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The aqueous dispersion according to claim 11, wherein the at least one crosslinking agent is at least one selected from the group consisting of triallylamine, pentaerythrityl triallyl ether, methylenebisacrylamide, N,N'-divinylethyleneurea, a dihydric alcohols of 2 to 4 carbon atoms which ~~are~~ is completely esterified with acrylic acid or methacrylic acid, ethoxylated trimethylolpropane ~~triacrylates~~ triacrylate, ethoxylated trimethylolpropane ~~trimethacrylates~~ trimethacrylate, pentaerythrityl triacrylate, pentaerythrityl tetraacrylate, and ~~and/or~~ triallylmethylammonium chloride ~~are used as the crosslinking agent~~.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of an aqueous ~~dispersions~~ dispersion of water-soluble polymers comprising:

free radical polymerizing ~~of~~ ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomers ~~by free radical polymerization of the monomers~~ in an aqueous medium in the presence of at least one

stabilizer, wherein the free radical polymerization is carried out at a pH of from 1 to 13 and ~~in the presence of at least one water-soluble polymer of~~ the at least one stabilizer comprises:

(a) at least one water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of a graft ~~polymers~~ polymer of vinyl acetate and/or vinyl propionate on polyethylene ~~glycols~~ glycol, a polyethylene ~~glycols~~ glycol blocked at one or both terminal groups with an alkyl, a carboxyl or an amino ~~groups~~ group, and a coplymer ~~copolymers~~ of alkyl polyalkylene glycol ~~methacrylates~~ methacrylate and methacrylic acid, and

~~and at least one water-soluble polymer selected from~~

(b) at least one water-soluble polymer selected from the group consisting of a hydrolyzed ~~copolymers~~ copolymer of vinyl alkyl ~~ethers~~ ether and maleic anhydride in the form of ~~the~~ a free carboxyl ~~groups~~ group and in the form of ~~the salts~~ a salt at least partly neutralized with one or more alkali metal hydroxides or one or more ammonium bases, and ~~and/or~~ maltodextrin~~, as a stabilizer at a pH of from 1 to 13~~.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A method for thickening an aqueous ~~systems~~ system, the method comprising:

adding ~~an~~ the aqueous dispersion according to claim 1 to the aqueous ~~systems~~ system.

Claim 15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 14, wherein the aqueous dispersion is used as an additive to paper coating slips, as thickeners for pigment print pastes and for water-based surface coatings, as thickeners for cosmetic formulations and for the surface treatment of leather.